

P 071729Z JAN 99  
FM USINT HAVANA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0674  
INFO ALL EUROPEAN UNION POST COLLECTIVE  
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL  
JTLO MIAMI FL  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
USEU BRUSSELS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HAVANA 000075

ROME ALSO FOR EMBASSY VATICAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1-6-09  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CU](#)  
SUBJECT: CASTRO SPEAKS ON REVOLUTION'S 40TH BIRTHDAY  
  
REF: FBIS 301938Z DEC 98

(U) CLASSIFIED BY MICHAEL G. KOZAK, PRINCIPAL  
OFFICER, FOR REASON 1.5 (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: IN A RELATIVELY SHORT JANUARY 1  
SPEECH, FIDEL CASTRO RECALLED THE HEROIC MOMENTS OF  
HIS REVOLUTION S TRIUMPH 40 YEARS AGO AND WARNED OF  
THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS HE SAID WAS INEVITABLE.  
ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, CASTRO SPOKE TO CUBA S YOUTH,  
TELLING THEM THAT CUBA S REVOLUTION "HAS JUST BEGUN",  
AND REMINDING THEM THAT "GLORIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS"  
AWAIT THEM, TOO. CASTRO S CHICKEN LITTLE SCENARIO  
FOR WORLD FINANCES AND HIS TOTAL AVOIDANCE OF THE  
CUBAN PEOPLE S REAL PERSONAL CRISES GIVE NO EVIDENCE  
OF A PLAN FOR RESCUING CUBA FROM THE ECONOMIC AND  
OTHER CRISES IT FINDS ITSELF IN. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) CASTRO S SPEECH, PRINTED IN ITS ENTIRETY IN  
THE JANUARY 4 EDITION OF THE WEEKLY "TRABAJADORES",  
TOOK PLACE IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA S CESPEDES PARK.  
CASTRO SPENT THE FIRST THIRD OF HIS SPEECH RECALLING  
THE SACRIFICES AND HEROISM OF THE GUERRILLAS WHO  
HELPED WIN THE FIRST BATTLES OF THE REVOLUTION IN  
SEVERAL EASTERN CUBA TOWNS. FIDEL CALLED CAMILO  
CIENFUEGOS AND CHE GUEVARA "MEN OF IRON", AND  
ENCOURAGED CUBAN YOUTH TO READ CHE S WAR NARRATIVE  
"PASAJES DE LA GUERRA REVOLUCIONARIA." CASTRO NOTED  
THAT THE ONLY OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE THE REVOLUTION  
RECEIVED WERE 150 SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLES SENT BY THE  
VENEZUELAN ADMIRAL LARRAZABAL. OTHERWISE, SAID  
FIDEL, "MORE THAN NINETY PERCENT OF THE ARMS AND  
MUNITIONS WITH WHICH WE MADE AND WON THE WAR WERE  
TAKEN FROM THE ENEMY IN COMBAT."

¶3. (U) TRANSITIONING FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO  
PRESENT-DAY CUBA, CASTRO SAID "FOR THE NEWER  
GENERATIONS, THE REVOLUTION HAS JUST BEGUN." CASTRO  
NOTED THAT THOSE PRESENT WERE NOT THE SAME AS THOSE  
CUBANS PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION S

TRIUMPH. CASTRO ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF WAS "NOT EXACTLY THE SAME MAN" THAT HE WAS FORTY YEARS AGO. "HE IS ONLY SOMEONE MUCH YOUNGER, WHO HAS THE SAME NAME, WHO DRESSES THE SAME, WHO THINKS THE SAME, WHO DREAMS THE SAME."

14. (U) COMPARING DEMOGRAPHICS OF 1959 CUBA TO 1999 CUBA, CASTRO SAID OF THE ROUGHLY 11 MILLION CUBANS IN CUBA TODAY, 7.2 MILLION WERE BORN AFTER THE TRIUMPH OF THE REVOLUTION, AND ANOTHER 1.35 MILLION WERE LESS THAN TEN YEARS OLD. HE CLAIMED THAT "THIRTY PERCENT" OF CUBANS IN 1959 COULD NOT READ, AND "SIXTY PERCENT" HAD NOT COMPLETED SIXTH GRADE. NOW, SAID CASTRO, TEACHERS AND PROFESSORS IN CUBA NUMBER 250,000; THERE ARE 64,000 DOCTORS, AND 600,000 UNIVERSITY GRADUATES. "AN ILLITERATE PERSON DOES NOT EXIST, AND IT IS EXTREMELY RARE THAT SOMEONE NOT HAVE A SIXTH GRADE EDUCATION." IN SUM, CASTRO SAID THE "HEROIC" CUBAN PEOPLE S MOST GLORIOUS AND REVOLUTIONARY EPOCH HAS BEEN THE STILL-ONGOING "SPECIAL PERIOD", "AS WE REMAIN ABSOLUTELY ALONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEST, 90 MILES AWAY FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND WE HAVE DECIDED TO KEEP GOING FORWARD."

15. (U) CASTRO DEVOTED ALMOST THE ENTIRE REMAINDER OF HIS SPEECH, ROUGHLY SIXTY PERCENT, WARNING LISTENERS THAT THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS "UNSUSTAINABLE", THAT "THE ECONOMIC ORDER THAT PREVAILS TODAY ON THE PLANET WILL INEVITABLY FALL", AND THAT "MARKET THEOLOGY IS SECTARIAN, FUNDAMENTALIST, AND ANTIECUMENICAL."

16. (U) USING INFLAMMATORY RHETORIC, CASTRO DISCUSSED THE "WOLVES" WHO SPECULATE IN FOREIGN CURRENCIES, CREDITING GEORGE SOROS WITH "BRINGING GREAT BRITAIN TO ITS KNEES" THROUGH SPECULATION IN THE BRITISH POUND. THE CUBAN LEADER ALSO SAID "THE WHOLE WORLD IS TALKING ABOUT AN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CRISIS, THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVEN T FOUND OUT ABOUT IT ARE THE AMERICANS: THEY HAVE SPENT MORE THAN EVER, AND THEIR SAVINGS ARE LESS THAN ZERO."

17. (U) CASTRO DESCRIBED TO THE SANTIAGO CROWD A WORLD IN WHICH COMPLEX FINANCIAL STRUCTURES HAD GOTTEN OUT OF CONTROL, COMPARING THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM TO A HUMAN BODY INFECTED WITH AIDS. FIDEL SAID THE WORLD HAD TURNED INTO "ONE BIG CASINO" WHERE "CURRENCY SPECULATION" AND TRADING IN DERIVATIVES--EVEN "EMPLOYING COMPUTERS" TO MAKE "SOPHISTICATED CALCULATIONS"--HAD BECOME COMMONPLACE. CASTRO CITED THE COLLAPSE OF THE LONG TERM CAPITAL FUND IN WHICH "TWO NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS IN ECONOMY AND SOME OF THE BEST PROGRAMMERS IN THE WORLD" COMBINED TO BRING THE FUND TO THE VERGE OF FINANCIAL COLLAPSE, THE CONSEQUENCES OF WHICH WERE "INCALCULABLE."

18. (C) ALSO NOTEWORTHY IN CASTRO S REMARKS WAS HIS CALL FOR THE THIRD WORLD S (PRESUMABLY INCLUDING CUBA) PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED FROM OUTSIDE. "THERE ISN T THE MOST MINIMAL IDEA OF HOW TO RESOLVE THE THIRD WORLD S PROBLEMS." "WHERE ARE THE CONSUMERS OF THE THIRD WORLD S PRODUCTS?" CASTRO SAID THE UNITED NATIONS, PROVIDED IT "PUTS AN END TO THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL", COULD HELP PROGRAM WORLD DEVELOPMENT. CERTAINLY, SAID CASTRO, THAT RESPONSIBILITY CANNOT BE "IN THE HANDS OF MULTINATIONALS AND IN THE BLIND AND CHAOTIC LAWS OF THE MARKET." CASTRO ADDED THAT THE AUTHORITY OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE BROADENED.

19. (C) COMMENT: CASTRO S SPEECH IS TYPICAL IN ITS FOCUS ON TWO CURRENT THEMES: THE "MILITARY MIRACLE" OF HIS REVOLUTION S OVERTHROW OF THE BATISTA GOVERNMENT, AND THE "INEVITABLE" GLOBAL FINANCIAL COLLAPSE BROUGHT ON BY UNBRIDLED FREEDOM OF THE GLOBAL CAPITALIST SYSTEM. WITH LITTLE TO OFFER IN DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, CASTRO (AGAIN)

CONCENTRATED HIS REMARKS ON THE CERTAINTY OF THE PAST AND PLAYED ON FEARS OF A WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS TO VINDICATE THE CORRECTNESS OF HIS OWN INSISTENCE ON RETAINING A SOVIET STYLE COMMAND ECONOMY. HIS REMARKS COMMEMORATING THE REVOLUTION S 40TH ANNIVERSARY GIVE LITTLE ROOM FOR HOPE THAT HE IS PREPARING FOR ADDITIONAL MARKET ORIENTED REFORMS. APPARENTLY WE WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE CUBAN ECONOMY AGAIN REACHES THE SORT OF DIRE SITUATION IT FACED IN 1994 BEFORE CASTRO AND HIS REACTIONARY COLLEAGUES WILL BE FORCED TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE NEED FOR REFORM. NOTE: FOR ANOTHER RECENT EXAMPLE OF GOC SPEECHMAKING REMOVED FROM REALITY, SEE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT RICARDO ALARCON S SPEECH ENDING THE ASSEMBLY S MOST RECENT SESSION (REFTEL).

KOZAK